

Coins represent camaraderie, trust

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377th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

Carrying an organizational coin is an honored tradition that represents the camaraderie, trust and loyalty of an organization's members. The coin itself has a long history and is treated by many as a treasured symbol.

History

During World War I, American volunteers formed flying squadrons in aid of the war effort. One of the men, a wealthy lieutenant, designed and ordered bronze-dipped medallions with the squadron emblem for each member of his squadron. He carried his medallion in a small leather sack around his neck.

Shortly after the distribution of the medallions the young pilot was sent into combat. His aircraft was severely damaged by enemy ground fire and he was forced to land behind enemy lines. He was captured by a

German patrol and stripped of all personal identification and anything else of value, except for the small leather pouch around his neck.

One night, after being taken to a small French town near the front, he took the opportunity during a bombardment to don civilian clothes and escape. He reached the front lines and stumbled into a French outpost. Not trusting the American's accent, the French thought him to be another German saboteur and made plans to execute him.

Just before his execution the pilot remembered the leather pouch containing the medallion. He took out his coin and showed it to his captors. The French executioners recognized the squadron insignia and delayed the execution to confirm his identity. Once identified, instead of shooting him, the French gave the pilot a hot meal and a bottle of wine.

Back at the pilot's squadron, it became a standing tradition to ensure that all members

carried their coins at all times. This was accomplished through constantly conducting challenges, known today as coin checks.

Coin Check Rules of Engagement

Rules of the tradition must be explained to all new coin holders. If an individual has never received, or wishes not to participate in the honored tradition, they must be ridiculed but cannot be held accountable. The burden of proof is upon the challenged.

Coins must not be handed to a person, this is considered giving the coin away and you must barter for its return. The coin should be placed on a flat surface and may then be picked up for examination.

Honor requires a person to place the

coin back. You cannot be challenged while someone is examining your coin. Losing your coin does not relieve you of your responsibility.

★ A "challenger" placing an organizational coin (intentionally or unintentionally) on a flat surface in the presence of another coin holder constitutes a challenge.

★ The "challengee" must have the coin available within three steps. Challengees going outside of the three-step radius will be considered unable to produce a coin.

★ Any "challengee" unable to produce a coin will buy all the "challengers" present a drink of the "challengees" choice.

★ If all parties present produce a coin, the "challenger" must buy drinks for everyone challenged.

★ A "challengee" is required to buy any one party only one drink a day; except field grade officers and senior NCOs who may buy up to two times a day.

★ No coin checks are allowed on the flight line or in aircraft at any time.

★ Any violation of the Rules of Engagement costs a drink to the rule-breaker.



Photo by Terry Walker

FORUM

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COL. HENRY L. ANDREWS JR.
377th Air Base Wing commander

Thanks for courteous guards

As an Air Force retiree, I wish to bring attention to the Army National Guardsmen who are manning Kirtland AFB's gates.

They take time to be courteous. I especially like that they refer to your rank and tell you to have a good day. They seem to do this for enlisted as well as officers.

We appreciate the kind words. We have received many compliments on the Army National Guard Soldiers at the gate. These professionals work very hard at not only providing outstanding entry control and protection for the installation, but do

so in a courteous and personalized manner. They have been an outstanding asset during long hours and performance of difficult tasks. We are very proud to have them as a part of our team.

Thank you again for taking the time to recognize them.

BX prices too high

I have spoken to the BX personnel several times about the pricing and have been told that they go out to nearby stores to check their prices.

I have purchased over 500 DVDs in the last few years and every time I go to the BX, the prices are above local stores. The only prices they compete with are the mall prices, which are ridiculous prices. They don't seem to be caring enough to try to lower the prices; therefore, I have no need to go to the BX. When I do go, seldom, I find there are not too many people shopping at the BX. So, I am wondering about the prices on other products. Are they really trying to compete with local stores in town, or are they trying to give the military people a better benefit, or are they trying to drive away the customers?

Usually, when you go to the BX, you would expect to get better deals than off base. The only difference from getting it at the BX, is the tax. For a dollar or two, it is not worth the effort to come onto the base and go through all that just to get a DVD, when I can go to downtown and get it cheaper.

So, if the BX is trying to drive away the people, I think they are doing a good job at it. I wish they would just get off their butts and go out to find real prices that people are

going to pay.

We believe the Army and Air Force Exchange Service generally provides our customers the best prices in town, especially when you compare brand to brand. Despite all our efforts, our competition sometimes finds ways to undersell us. That is why we implemented our Best Price policy. We'll reduce our prices to match a competitor's lower price.

If you see an identical item advertised by another retail store in the local area for less than AAFES' price, bring in the ad and we'll match the price. If you even tell us about an unadvertised price, we'll check it out as quickly as we can. If the price difference is less than \$5, we lower the price for you immediately... no proof required.

We also have a 30-day Price Guarantee. If a customer buys an item from us and finds it advertised for less (whether at the exchange or a local retailer), we'll refund the difference when presented a receipt within 30 days of purchase. Along with our Best Price policy, most of our exchanges have a price survey or monitor our competition's prices with ours as well as to verify price challenges.

Our goal is to offer merchandise to our customers at an average overall savings of 20 percent when compared to outside commercial prices. This doesn't mean that we have the lowest price on everything in our stores—but we try hard to do so.

I'm sorry we haven't been meeting your expectations regarding our prices. AAFES' mission is to generate

earnings to support morale, welfare and recreational facilities. In addition, AAFES earnings fund construction and modernization of exchange facilities without expense to the federal government. These contributions to the Soldier and Airman and their families make AAFES a major non-pay benefit to customers.

When you consider today's retail environment, having to compete with mass merchants that have over 2,500 stores—AAFES does a terrific job. Our profits are not making rich people richer, but rather giving back to the people who have served in their nations armed forces.

Contacting Forum

We want your suggestions and comments concerning Kirtland AFB.

Give base agencies or the chain of command the chance to resolve your concern before calling Forum.

Callers' names won't be printed.

Write: 377 ABW/CC Forum
2000 Wyoming SE
Kirtland AFB NM 87117

Customer service

Chapel, 846-5691
CE Help Desk, 846-8222
Commissary, 846-9586
Computer help, 846-5926
Energy wasting, 846-4633
Exchange Service, 266-9887
Family Services, 846-0741
Finance, 846-8045, 846-6639
Law Enforcement, 846-7926
Legal Services, 846-4217
Medical Clinic, 846-3406
Services Squadron, 853-7679